Cerritos Advanced Conference 2020

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)

Topic A: Gender-Based Violence

Topic B: Female Participation in Leadership and Politics

Director: Hannah Chung

POSITION PAPERS DUE on October 17th by 11:59 pm to Committee Email

October 24-25, 2020

To Delegates of CHSMUN Advanced 2020

Dear Delegates,
Welcome to CHSMUN Advanced 2020!

It is our highest honor and pleasure to welcome you all to our 2020 online advanced conference here at Cerritos High School. On behalf of the Cerritos High School Model United Nations program, we are proud to host our very first advanced conference, where you will become more knowledgeable on international issues, participate in intellectually stimulating discussions, and create new and everlasting friendships.

The CHSMUN program continues to compete around the world as a nationally ranked MUN program. Our delegates utilize diplomacy in order to create complex solutions towards multilateral issues in the global community. Our head chairs are selected from only the best seniors of our program, undergoing a rigorous training process to ensure the highest quality of moderating and grading of debate. Furthermore, all the topic synopses have been reviewed and edited numerous times. We strongly believe that by providing each and every delegate with the necessary tools and understanding, he or she will have everything they need to thrive in all aspects of the committee. We thoroughly encourage each delegate to engage in all of the facets of their topic, in order to grow in their skills as a delegate and develop a greater knowledge of the world around them.

Although this wasn't what we expected, our advisors and staff have put in countless hours to ensure delegates have an amazing experience at the online conference. Our greatest hope is that from attending CHSMUN 2020, students are encouraged to continue on in Model United Nations and nevertheless, inspired to spark change in their surrounding communities. With this strong circuit consisting of 6 schools and over 500 delegates, CHSMUN Advanced 2020 will provide a quality experience for intermediate delegates to enhance their speaking and delegating skills.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please contact us! We look forward to seeing you at CHSMUN Advanced 2020!

Sincerely,

Anjali Mani and Karishma Patel

sg.cerritosmun@gmail.com

Secretary-Generals

A Note From The Director

Delegates,

My name is Hannah Chung and I am so excited to be your chair for the United Nations Women Committee (UN WOMEN). I am currently a senior at Cerritos High School entering my fourth year of MUN. Model United Nations has opened my eyes to global issues and has shaped me to become confident in my speaking abilities. Outside of MUN, I am the Vice President of Key Club, and part of the board for Surfrider, Lighthouse, and ASB. In my free time, I like to embroider, listen to music, and literally sleep (taking naps are my forte). I am extremely involved at my church, volunteering as a Sunday school teacher for toddlers, for about six years ongoing. Although this conference will be online, I hope to meet interactive engaging delegates and look forward to hearing all your ideas! Good luck! :)

Sincerely,

Hannah Chung

unwomen.CHSMUN@gmail.com

Director, UN Women

Committee Introduction

In July 2010, the United Nations General Assembly created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, to address the challenges women face around the world. UN Women was built upon four main parts of the UN system focused on promoting gender equality: Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). UN Women has made notable progress in advocating for women's rights and advancing gender equality, through agreements such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Convention on the Eliminations of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Such agreements have been used to eliminate and define all acts of discrimination and violence against women in 189 states in the United Nations. UN Women has made its goal to accomplish the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 5 which is aimed in promoting gender equality linked to the 2030 Agenda and is centered in empowering women and girls for a gender inclusive future. UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes, and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide.

Topic A: Gender-Based Violence

Background:

Whether at home, on the streets, or during war, violence against women and girls continues to be a human rights violation of pandemic proportions that takes place in public and private spaces. According to the United Nations, gender-based violence is a violation of human rights that is inflicted upon a person against their will due to gender norms and unequal power within relationships. Gender-based violence undermines the health, dignity, security, and autonomy of its victims, yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence. Various forms of violence such as sexual and domestic abuse, female genital mutilation, honor killings, and more have become common practices in developing countries that believe men are superior to women.Victims of violence can suffer sexual and reproductive health consequences, including forced and unwanted pregnancies, unsafe abortions, traumatic fistula, sexually transmitted infections including HIV, and even death. Gender based violence is enacted under many manifestations, such as physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, and more . Furthermore, it is estimated that 35 percent of women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or sexual violence by a non-partner at some point in their lives.Gender-based violence is deeply rooted in discriminatory cultural beliefs and attitudes that perpetuate inequality and powerlessness, in particular of women and girls. Various other factors, such as poverty, lack of education and livelihood opportunities, and impunity for crime and abuse, also tend to contribute to and reinforce a culture of violence and discrimination based on gender. Such factors are frequently aggravated in times of conflict and displacement as the rule of law is eroded and families and societies are torn apart. The result is often an increase in both the frequency and brutality of gender-based violence. In its worst form, gender-based violence has become a weapon of war, intentionally directed against and aimed at terrorizing, displacing and destroying certain communities of ethnic groups. Women and girls in these societies are forced to undergo female genital mutilation (FGM) especially in cultures where FGM is associated with ideals of feminity and modesty, making this practice difficult to eliminate. At least 200 million women and girls aged 15-49 have undergone female genital mutilation in the 30 countries with representative data on prevalence. In most of these countries, the majority of girls underwent FGM procedures before age five. Issues such as human trafficking and child marriages often affect women and girls the most especially in vulnerable and poverty stricken populations. Gender-based violence prominently manifests in child marriage. Studies have shown that girls who marry early in their childhoods are at a higher risk for intimate partner violence than those who marry later in their lives. In sub-Saharan Africa, almost 4 out of 10 young women are married before their 18th birthday, where over 12 millions girls under 18 have been sent off for underage marriage. Women and girls are disproportionately impacted by human trafficking. Although data is lacking, estimates indicate that women and girls may constitute up to 80% of persons trafficking globally, with more than 60% of those trafficked coming from the Asia region. Gender-based violence is usually perpetrated by persons who hold a position of power or control others, whether in the private or public sphere. In most cases,

those responsible are known to the victim/survivor, such as intimate partners, members of the (extended) family, friends, teachers or community leaders. Others in positions of authority such as police or prison officials, and members or armed forces and groups, are frequently responsible for such acts, in particular in times of armed conflict. In some cases, this has also included humanitarian workers and peacekeepers. Legal systems and public policy frameworks have often overlooked the crisis of violence against women. In failing to protect the rights and well-being of survivors or punish perpetrators, many reflect social biases tolerating violence. Domestic violence and harmful traditional practices have often been seen as private matters that are "outside justice." Therefore, in the majority of countries with available data, less than 40% of women who experience violence seek help of any sort. Among women who do, most look to family and friends and very few look to formal institutions and mechanisms, such as police and health services. The same inequalities that underpin the crime of trafficking also prevent women and girls from accessing protection and assistance. Trafficked women may be unwilling to come forward to the police, due to a lack of gender sensitivity or knowledge from law enforcement agents. Oftentimes, many survivors are often turned away and urged to seek mediation or other forms of settlement. At least 144 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, and 154 have laws on sexual harassment. Almost three-quarters of the world's countries have outlawed domestic violence and 78 countries have legislations that explicitly criminalizes marital rape. While a historic number of laws and policies against violence are now in place, implementation is still lagging behind. This issue is not only devastating for survivors of violence and their families, but also entails a significant social and economic cost. In some countries, violence against women is estimated to cost countries up to 3.7% of their GDP, more than double what most government spend on education. Numerous studies have shown that children growing up with violence are more likely to become survivors themselves or perpetrators of the future. Similar to data from other regions, in all four countries of a multi-country study from the Middle East and North Africa, men who witnessed their fathers using violence against their mothers and men who experienced some form of violence at home as children, were significantly more likely to report perpetrating intimate partner violence in their adult relationships. One characteristic of gender-based violence is that it knows no social or economic boundaries and affects women and girls of all socioeconomic backgrounds: this issue needs to be addressed in both developing and developed countries.

United Nations Involvement:

In terms of combating violence against women, the United Nations created UN Women in July 2010, an entity working for the empowerment of women. UN Women, in partnership with the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) has developed a global non-formal education curriculum to engage young people in efforts to prevent and end violence against girls and women. Furthermore, at a regional level, UN Women supports Partners for Prevention (P4P), a regional UN joint programme for Asia and the Pacific that provides new knowledge and technical support to prevent gender-based violence in the region. At a national level, UN Women supports a range of prevention activities, supporting research to get data on the attitudes, perceptions and behavior or men and boys as well as young people related to various forms of violence supporting advocacy, awareness-raising, community mobilization and

educational programmes, as well as legal and policy reforms. Woman's right to live free from violence is upheld by international agreements such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, especially through General Recommendations 12 and 19, and the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. UN Women works with countries at global level to advance the international normative Frameworks through support provided to inter-governmental processes, such as the General Assembly and the CSW. At the country-level, UN Woman supports governments in adopting and enacting legal reforms aligned with International standards. Furthemore, launched in 2008, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's *UNiTE to End Violence against Women* campaign is a multi-year effort aimed at preventing and eliminating violence against women and girls around the world. The campaign builds on existing international legal and policy frameworks, and works to synergize the efforts of all UN offices and agencies working to end violence against women. In 2000, the Security Council adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace, and security which was a milestone in addressing violence against women in situations of armed conflict. Adding on, in 2004, the UN General Assembly also specifically addressed domestic violence in Resolution 58/147, entitled "Elimination of domestic violence against women." In this important resolution, the General Assembly recognizing that domestic violence is a human rights issue with serious immediate and long-term implications, strongly condemned all forms of domestic violence against women and girls and called for an elimination of violence in the family. In addition, the United Nations Development Programme works with national partners on legal and policy frameworks to combat gender-based violence and supports national capacities to prevent violence and end impunity for perpetrators, ensure access to justice and protection of women and girls and to provide survivors with multi-sectoral support and services. As part of these efforts, UNDP works closely with UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF. For example, UNDP is a key partner in the European Union-United Nations Spotlight Initiative to Eliminate Violence Against Women and has launched the Ending Gender-based Violence and Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (2018-2020) global project.The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Established by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in June 1946, CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women. The priority theme for the Commission on the States of Women for 2021 focuses on the elimination of gender-based violence as well as women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life.

Case Study: Sub-Saharan Africa

Gender-based violence is reported as a common practice in Sub-Saharan Africa and sexual violence prevalence is high in some countries such as Zambia (90%) and Ethiopia (71%). According to the Gender Equality Index Report, 27 of the 30 countries in the world that exhibit unequitable gender indices, are in Africa. Most African cultural beliefs and traditions prompt men's hierarchical role in sexual relationships and especially in marriage. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the African population live in remote rural settings that increases the difficulty to

access basic amenities and communities that are disparate from the influence of central government or laws that prohibit gender-based violence. Only 22 African countries have adopted laws that prohibit gender-based violence. In a study conducted by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, the findings showed that the pooled prevalence of gender-based violence was extremely high in Sub-Saharan African countries. This high pooled prevalence included almost half of the women experiencing intimate partner violence and a considerable number of females being abused by non-intimate partner violence. Emotional intimate partner violence was the most common type of violence in Sub-Saharan Africa. Gender-based violence was more prevalent in the sub-regions, in Western and Eastern Africa as compared to southern regions of SSA countries.Overall, a high pooled prevalence of intimate partner violence among women in Sub-Saharan Africa was found as compared to the global estimate which was conducted in 56 countries in 2013 and Sub-Saharan African countries. Most importantly, this high prevalence was due to the prevalence of gender inequality in regions for reasons including prerogative perceptions to males, tolerant attitudes in the community to intimate partner violence, poor education of women, female disempowerment and limited law enforcement in Sub-Saharan Africa.In addition, all types of Gender-based violence, physical, sexual and emotional violence were consistently higher in Sub-Saharan Africa countries as compared to many other regions in the world. Emotional violence was the most prevalent reported type of violence. Sexual experiences are reported not as frequently in many African countries for numerous reasons. The pattern of sexual violence is lower than emotional and physical violence, which might be related to victimized women being unlikely to report an attack due to fear of discrimination, feeling shame, and not being able to identify as well as physical violence.

Bloc Positions:

Western: The Western bloc is known for openly promoting the empowerment of women as well as eliminating gender-based violence at home, schools, workplaces, and etc. Although the issues of poverty, human trafficking, and child marriage are significantly less prominent in this sector, gender based violence does take place, with domestic violence being the most prominent. Seeing how the prevalence of gender based violence in the United States has become the focus of a national conversation due to events such as the #MeToo movements, many policymakers have been quick to profess support in eliminating gender based violence. However, issues are often overlooked with quick fixes, therefore, delegates should focus on more holistic responses in addressing the full range of underlying problems.

Latin America and Caribbean: Despite laws against gender-based violence, many women in Latin America and Caribbean bloc continue to be failed by the legal system. To date, nearly 30 countries in the region have enacted laws against domestic violence or have characterized the violence as a crime. Surveys from various countries, however, indicate that an estimated 10 to 50 percent of women report being physically assaulted by their male partner. Husbands or partners are responsible for the majority of aggression, injuries, sexual abuse, and homicide. Enforcement

of domestic violence laws remains a major concern. Police often fail to respond or are hostile to women who report domestic violence.

African: Most countries in the African bloc continue to lag behind the rest of the world on eliminating gender based violence, in large part due to deeply entrenched, discriminatory views about the role and position of women and girls in society. Gender-based violence goes beyond beatings including martial rape, sexual harrassment, trafficking, female genital multilation yet there is a lack of laws implemented and effectively followed causing an neverending cycle of violence. Cultural norms in this bloc place women in subservient positions in relation to their husbands and males leading to the justification of gender based violence. Delegates should be wary of religious and cultural practices in this bloc when proposing solutions in eliminating gender based violence.

Asian-Pacific: Gender-based violence is also very prevalent in the Asian-Pacific bloc. Violence against women is one of the deadliest forms of violence in Asia, yet it is dramatically overlooked by governments and policymakers. Most countries in Asia have laws against domestic violence, but nearly all laws exclude unmarried intimate partners. A key obstacle to developing evidence-based violence against women or/and gender-based violence policies and programmes is the lack of reliable and international comparable national data on this subject. In addition, child marriage and poverty in these regions often lead to violence against women and girls and the human trafficking ring in South-East Asia continues to subject women to harsh treatment.

Basic Solutions:

Eliminating gender-based violence involves addressing numerous factors including poverty, human trafficking, child marriage, and etc. Education plays an immense role in this issue. The number of years a person spends in school has been shown to have a positive correlation with a decrease in both future victimization and perpetration of physical and sexual violence. Education increases women's employment opportunities and socio-economic status. The empowerment of women reduces the unequal power relationship between women and men which has been identified as the root cause of GBV. Whenever educated women are given the opportunity to work and earn wages, they are more likely to adopt a larger economy within their household and communities and support their families with 90% of what they've earned. Therefore, it is necessary for women to access education which would not only reduce the amount of gender-based violence cases, but also boost the economic status of families in poverty. Not only is it important to educate women, but also men and boys. Working with men and boys helps accelerate progress in preventing gender-based violence, as they can begin to challenge the deeply rooted inequalities and social norms that perpetuate men's control and power over women and reinforce tolerance for gender-based violence. Seeing how gender-based violence is such a broad topic including sexual, physical, and psychological violence, delegates are encouraged to propose a variety of solutions, not limiting solutions to education.

Questions to Consider:

1. What has your country done to eliminate gender-based violence?
2. What efforts can be taken to decrease government and law enforcement corruption in order to ensure protection for women and to prevent gender-based violence?
3. How do you plan on eliminating gender-based violence in developing nations where cultural and socioeconomic stigmas have caused women to be viewed as less valuable than men?
4. What are major factors and underlying causes that contribute to gender-based violence and how can you prevent them from occurring?
5. In what ways can you engage men and boys in eliminating gender-based violence?
6. How do you plan on eliminating gender-based violence in areas that are more vulnerable and susceptible to violence, such as war torn nations or refugee camps?

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Topic B: Female Participation in Leadership and Politics

Background:

From the local to the global level, women's leadership and political participation are restricted. Women are underrepresented as voters, as well as in leading positions, whether in elected office, the civil service, or the private sector. This occurs despite their proven abilities as leaders and agents of change, and their right to participate equally in democratic governance.Women face several obstacles to participating in political life. Structural barriers through discriminatory laws and institutions limit women's options to run for office. Capacity gaps mean women are less likely than men to have the education, contacts, and resources needed to become effective leaders. Discriminatory social norms restrict women's role to the private realm of the household: unpaid care work; lack of economic opportunities; social expectations that men are natural leaders, violence against women in public life, and laws and political institutions that disregard women's rights all further restrict women's political participation. The traditional working patterns of many political parties and government structures continue to be barriers to women's participation in public life. Women may be discouraged from seeking political office by discriminatory attitudes and practices, family and child-care responsibilities, and the high cost of seeking and holding public office. The unequal division of labour and responsibilities within households, based on unequal power relations, also limits women's potential to find the time and develop the skills required for participation in decision-making in wider public forums. Women's equal political participation requires that more women are present in national parliaments, local councils and community associations.To make this a reality, the barriers to women's participation have to be removed. Despite the widespread movement towards democratization in most countries, women are largely underrepresented at most levels of government, especially in ministerial and other executive bodies, and have made little progress in attaining political power in legislative bodies or in achieving the target endorsed by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of having 30% women in positions at decision-making levels by 1995. Globally, only 10% of the members of legislative bodies and a lower percentage of ministerial positions are now held by women. Indeed, some countries, including those that are undergoing fundamental political, economic, and social changes, have seen a significant decrease in the number of women represented in legislative bodies. Although women make up at least half of the electorate in almost all countries and have attained the right to vote and hold office in almost all member states, women continue to be seriously underrepresented as candidates for public office. Only 24.3% of all national parliaments were women as of February 2019, a slow increase from 11.3% in 1995. Not only that, in 103 countries and areas with relevant data, women's representation in elected local deliberative bodies varied from less than 1% too close to parity, at 50%, with a median of 26%. Women in politics and decision-making positions in governments and legislative bodies contribute to redefining political priorities, placing new items on the political agenda that reflect and address women's gender-specific concerns, values and experiences, and providing new perspectives on

mainstream political issues. The low proportion of women among economic and political decision makers at the local, national, regional and international levels reflects structural and attitudinal barriers that need to be addressed through positive measures. Women have demonstrated considerable leadership in community and informal organizations, as well as in public office. However, socialization and negative stereotyping of women and men, including stereotyping through the media, reinforces the tendency for political decision-making to remain the domain of men. Likewise, the underrepresentation of women in decision-making positions in the areas of art, culture, sports, media, education, religion and the law have prevented women from having a significant impact on many key institutions. In the United States, specifically, 71% of arts and culture coverage went to men, 29% to women. Men were 93.4% of directors on top movies and the amount of women directors still remain outnumbered. 63% of online news was written by men, 40% by women. Owing to their limited access to the traditional avenues to power, such as the decision-making bodies of political parties, employer organizations and trade unions, women have gained access to power through alternative structures, particularly in the non-governmental organization sector. Through non-governmental organizations and grass-roots organizations, women have been able to articulate their interests and concerns and have placed women's issues on the national, regional and international agendas.The equitable distribution of power and decision-making at all levels is dependent on governments undertaking statistical gender analysis and mainstreaming a gender perspective in policy development and the implementation of programmes. Equality in decision-making is essential to the empowerment of women. In some countries, affirmative action has led to 33.3% or larger representation in local and national governments. National, regional and international statistical institutions still have insufficient knowledge of how to present the issues related to the equal treatment of women and men in the economic and social spheres. In particular, there is insufficient use of existing databases and methodologies in the important sphere of decision-making.In addressing the inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision-making at all levels, governments should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programmes so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively.

United Nations Involvement:

To combat this issue, the United Nations created UN Women, the United Nations entity dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. UN Women supports women participating and benefiting from government systems and in positions of power economically. UN Women also works to position gender equality as fundamental to the Sustainable Development Goals and agreemented linked to the 2030 Agenda. UN Women also created the Fund for Gender Equality (FGE) to support national, women led civil society organizations in achieving women’s economic and political empowerment. Through the Fund for Gender Equality, UN Women has collaborated with women’s grassroots groups to give them a greater voice on a range of issues. UN Women advocates for legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure women’s fair access to political spheres—as voters, candidates, elected officials and civil service members. UN Women collaborates with UN country teams and works with civil society

on programmes so that elections uphold women's rights, including to vote and campaign free from electoral violence.Furthermore, the United Nations has issued the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (DEDAW) which aims to ensure that women have equal rights in the political sphere, including the right to vote and right to seek and hold public office. The Convention of the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations in 1979, also discusses women's human rights such as women's participation in decision making, equality of women in economy, and etc. Article 7 of this bill declares that women should have an equal experience in: voting, in being elected to positions within government, and in working in NGOs and other organizations with a public interest. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action also calls for taking measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making. In this Declaration, it mentions multiple objectives that inform governments and high officials in promoting the equal rights of women in political activities and aims at gender balance in governmental bodies and committees. The 2011 UN General Assembly Resolution on women and political participation emphasizes the active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making and political participation in all Member States. Additionally, the Millennium Development Goals have measured progress towards gender equality in part by the proportion of women in parliamentary seats. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) created in December 1976, offers financial and technical assistance to innovative programmes that are designed to encourage the advancement and empowerment of women and gender equality. In June 2018, the United Nations launched HERstory: A Celebration of Leading Women in the United Nations, which highlighted a host of women leaders who helped form and run the organization from its very foundation under four of its most important pillars: human rights, development, peace and security, and leadership. The exhibition and book pays tribute to women's participation in the development of the United Nations. In addition, the United Nations System Staff College holds programs covering leadership approaches, gender and cultural dimensions of leadership, and UN experiences. Through conventions and seminars, UNSSC held multiple workshops and programs aimed at gearing women participants with the resources and skills needed for effective negotiation and leadership.

Case Study: Women in Politics in the Pacific Island Countries

Women and girls are underrepresented in the political arena, and shut out of decision-making that directly affects their lives. Increasing women's political participation and leadership are vital mechanisms that support women to realize their human rights. Pacific Island countries have some of the lowest levels of representation of women in parliaments and local governments in the world. Regionally, women make up 5.4% of parliament compared to the global average of 21.8%. Additionally, the three countries in the world that have no women in parliament are located in the Pacific. The small size of Pacific parliaments, and the

correspondingly low number of ministerial and public official positions available, can present additional barriers for women. The Pacific women who do participate in politics are often caught in a gendered double-bind. When female candidates are unsuccessful, female voters are often blamed for supposedly voting against their own interests. Conversely, when female candidates are successful, they are tasked with not only representing their constituencies in parliament, but representing all women; when they are perceived to fail at this task, they are vulnerable to a backlash at the next election. While there are notable exceptions, in general the few women who are elected in Pacific politics are rarely re-elected. The continued absence of women in decision-making and leadership in the Pacific further reinforces stereotypes, both amongst potential candidates and the general public, undermining efforts to build the skills, networks and confidence women need to change the game. Progress is being made, however. President Hilda Heine was sworn into office in Marshall Islands in 2016- the first woman elected as President of a Pacific Island country. In March of the same year, Fiame Naomi Mata'afa was appointed Deputy Prime Minister in Samoa following an election, during which temporary special measures were applied at national level for the first time in the Pacific. Additionally, in late 2014, Dr Jiko Luveni was appointed Speaker of the Parliament of Fiji- the first female in Fiji history to hold this office. Across the region, there has also been a slow but steady increase in the number of women standing for parliament and in the overall number of votes for women candidates. Women's participation in politics in the Pacific Islands is often seen as a form of social contract between women. Female voters are expected to vote for female candidates. In exchange, female parliamentarians are expected to act, not just for the constituency that elected them, but for women as a group.

Bloc Positions:

Western: Women in the Western Bloc constitute a powerful force in the electorate and inform policy making at all levels of the government. As of 2015, 20% of the U.S. Senate and 19.3% of the U.S. House of Representatives are women. These numbers represent an increase since 2003, when women held 14% of seats in the U.S. Senate. Despite this, women are still largely underrepresented at every level of the office, and progress toward achieving parity has nearly stalled. Discrimination is seen in instances where women candidates and elected officials may recieve fewer resources such as campaign donations and party financial support, or fewer opportunities to sponsor legislation or participate in influential committees. Furthermore, inappropriate and sexist comments and behaviors, such as a focus on outward appearance, questioning of qualifications for office all prevent women from succeeding in the political arena. This sexist treatment is most commonly associated with media coverage, but women also receive it from constituents, donors, peers and colleagues, and political party operatives and leaders, dissuading women from running for political office, or many influence a voter's likelihood of supporting a female candidate.

Latin America and Caribbean: This region has made progress in female representation at the legislative level. As of June 2018, women held 28.9% of congressional seats compared to a world average of 23.8%. Eleven countries in the Latin America and Caribbean bloc have instituted quotas that establish a minimum level of representation (between 20% and 40%) for

women in party lists for legislative elections. Quotas have increased women's presence in legislatures by an average of nine percentage points, demonstrating their effectiveness in increasing women's political representation in the region. Despite this significant regulatory progress, there are still large gender-based inequities in the political sphere. For example, even though in 2017 on average 28.1% of the members of parliament in the region are women (ranking the region second in the world), it has not yet been possible to go beyond 30%. In addition, there is a lack of gender-disaggregated surveys, and research studies on voter's preferences and behavior, the impact of women in office, and links between women's political participation and representation.

African: According to the InterParliamentary Union and UN Women's map of Women in Politics, there is a huge amount of variation in women's political representation across the African bloc. In some countries, including Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania, women make up a substantial portion of the legislature. Despite being one of the poorest regions in the world, the level of women's representation in parliament in sub-Saharan Africa is higher than in many wealthier countries. Most of the countries that have achieved significant increases in women's participation have done so through the use of quotas - a form of affirmative action in favour of women. However, women remain poorly represented in many others. The practice of quotas often lacks support from important political actors or meets opposition in societies that have strong patriarchal traditions.Cultural and traditional practices subjecting women to male dominance have also hindered women's progress in achieving gender equality in politics.

Asian-Pacific: Women are heavily underrepresented in leadership and political positions in the Asian-Pacific bloc. In this bloc, there is only one woman in leadership positions for every four men. In some countries in East Asia, there are only 12 to 20 women leaders for every 100 men. Although women's representation on boards increased from 6% in 2011 to 13% in 2016, it is still low compared to the average share in advanced nations of 28%. In all subregions there is strong resistance to women's participation in public life evidenced in the formal statements of leaders and politicians. Cultural, customary, and religious discourses are frequently used to moralize that the "rightful" place of women is not in politics. Furthermore, violence against "political" women speaking up in public, defending human rights or seeking political office is very common across Asia and the Pacific and strongly dissuades women from participating in public life let alone seeking political office.

Basic Solutions:

Women have the right to influence decisions that affect their lives, whether in the household, community, national governments or international institutions. Achieving women's participation and leadership requires understanding power dynamics and working with women and men to ensure equal access to, and influence in, decision-making processes. One solution can be training women candidates on local governance, missions and roles of municipal councils, as well as media relations. Initiated by UN Women and the Tunisian women's rights organization, the Women's Political Academy as well as training were able to conduct research

on women's expectations of municipal council's activities in five regions across the country. The study's results informed candidates' electoral campaigns and shaped regional development planning. This was implemented in Tunis where 10 women council members were voted into office in these local governments. Another solution is to hold political parties accountable in the gender balance between candidates and runners through international amendments or proposals.

Questions to Consider:

1. What has your country done to support women participating in political spheres and roles of leadership?
2. How do you plan on protecting the rights of women engaging in political activities and governmental bodies?
3. What measures are needed to encourage political parties and nations to integrate women in elective and nonelective public positions at the same levels as men?
4. How will you encourage greater involvement of indigenous women in decision-making as well as women that lack access to education and resources needed?
5. What are other leadership roles, besides at the governmental level, in which women can be involved in their local communities?

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